UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/50/844
23 December 1995
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

Fiftieth session
Agenda item 121

UNITED NATIONS COMMON SYSTEM

Report of the Fifth Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Peter MADDENS (Belgium)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its 3rd plenary meeting, on 22 September 1995, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in the agenda of the fiftieth session the item entitled "United Nations common system" and to allocate it to the Fifth Committee.

2. The Fifth Committee considered the item at its 28th, 30th, 31st, 34th, 36th and 44th meetings, on 20, 22, 27 and 30 November and 4 and 21 December 1995. Statements and observations made in the course of the Committee's discussion of the item are reflected in the relevant summary records (A/C.5/50/SR.28, 30, 31, 34, 36 and 44).

3. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the International Civil Service Commission for the year 1995 (A/50/30); 1/

(b) Statement submitted by the Secretary-General on the administrative and financial implications of the decisions and recommendations contained in the report of the International Civil Service Commission (A/C.5/50/24 and Corr.1);

1/ To be issued in final form as Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 30 (A/50/30).

(c) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting a statement adopted by the Administrative Committee on Coordination at its second regular session of 1995 (A/C.5/50/11);

(d) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting a statement adopted by the Administrative Committee on Coordination at its second regular session of 1995 (A/C.5/50/29);

(e) Note by the Secretary-General transmitting comments by the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations (A/C.5/50/23);

(f) Comments by the Coordinating Committee for International Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System (A/C.5/50/5).

4. At the 28th meeting, on 20 November, the Chairman of the International Civil Service Commission introduced the annual report of the Commission. At the same meeting, the Secretary-General of the United Nations spoke on behalf of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (see A/C.5/50/SR.28).

II. CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTION A/C.5/50/L.27

5. At the 44th meeting, on 21 December, the representative of New Zealand introduced a draft resolution entitled "United Nations common system: report of the International Civil Service Commission" (A/C.5/50/L.27), submitted by the Chairman of the Committee on the basis of informal consultations.

6. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.5/50/L.27 (see para. 7).

III. RECOMMENDATION OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE

7. The Fifth Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

United Nations common system: report of the International Civil Service Commission

The General Assembly,

Having considered the twenty-first annual report of the International Civil Service Commission 2/ and other related reports, 3/

2/ A/50/30. To be issued in final form as Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 30 (A/50/30).

3/ A/C.5/50/5, A/C.5/50/11, A/C.5/50/23, A/C.5/50/24 and Corr.1 and A/C.5/50/29.

Reaffirming its commitment to a single unified United Nations common system as the cornerstone for the regulation and coordination of the conditions of service of the United Nations common system,

Reaffirming also the central role of the Commission for the regulation and coordination of the conditions of service of the United Nations common system,

Takes note of the statement of the Administrative Committee on Coordination and of the introductory statement of the Secretary-General regarding the report of the Commission,

I

CONDITIONS OF SERVICE OF THE PROFESSIONAL AND HIGHER CATEGORIES

A. Examination of the Noblemaire principle and its application

Recalling its resolutions related to the study of all aspects of the application of the Noblemaire principle, 4/

Recalling also section I.B of its resolution 44/198 of 21 December 1989, by which it reaffirmed that the Noblemaire principle should continue to serve as the basis of comparison between United Nations emoluments and those of the highest-paying civil service,

Taking note of chapter III of the report of the International Civil Service Commission 1/ in respect of grade equivalencies with the comparator civil service, the evolution of the margin, the identification of the highest-paid national civil service and the collection of reference data from other international organizations, as well as the views expressed thereon by Member States in the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly,

Reconfirming the continued application of the Noblemaire principle,

Reaffirming the need to continue to ensure the competitiveness of the United Nations common system conditions of service,

1. Decides to defer its consideration of chapter III.A of the report of the International Civil Service Commission to its resumed fiftieth session, and requests the Commission to review its recommendations and conclusions, taking into account the views expressed by Member States in the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly, in particular regarding the appropriateness of reduction of dominance and the treatment of bonuses in determining net remuneration comparisons, so as to assist in that consideration, and to adjust its programme of work accordingly;

4/ Sections IV and VI of resolution 46/191 A; section II.C of resolution 47/216; sections II.A and II.B of resolution 48/224; and section III.A of resolution 49/223.

2. Takes note of the results of the study to identify the highest-paid national civil service, as set out in paragraph 172 (b) of the report of the Commission, bearing in mind the views expressed thereon by the Member State concerned;

3. Requests the Commission and the national civil service authorities concerned to resolve the outstanding difficulties in comparing differently designed civil services and grading systems, within the approved methodology, and to clarify the conclusions set out in paragraph 172 (b) (ii) and (iii) of its report, in order to complete the study on the highest paid national civil service, and to report thereon to the General Assembly;

4. Takes note of the recruitment and retention problems faced by some organizations in respect of certain specialized occupations, recalls its endorsement in principle of the use of special occupational rates in organizations with problems of recruitment and retention, and, in this context, requests the organizations to collect data to substantiate those problems, and the Commission to make recommendations regarding the conditions for the application of such rates, as appropriate;

B. Post adjustment matters

Recalling its request in section II.G of its resolution 48/224 of 23 December 1993, regarding place-to-place surveys conducted at headquarters duty stations,

Noting the decisions reached by the International Civil Service Commission in paragraphs 280, 294, 296 and 297 of its report in respect of the operation of the post adjustment system,

1. Welcomes the establishment by the International Civil Service Commission of a working group to examine the post adjustment system;

2. Requests the Commission to establish in 1996, in respect of staff members whose duty station is Geneva, a single post adjustment index which is fully representative of the cost of living of all staff working in the duty station and which ensures equality of treatment with staff in other headquarters duty stations;

3. Also requests the Commission to address and refer to its working group on post adjustment, as appropriate, the concerns raised by Member States in the Fifth Committee regarding the operation of the post adjustment system, including, inter alia, the issue of the post adjustment at the base of the common system, management of the differential in net remuneration between the common system and its comparator, developments in the comparator civil service, and the possible partial phasing out of the expatriate elements of the margin for staff with long service at one duty station, and requests the Commission to review all the issues relating to the post adjustment system based on the study by its working group and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session;

II

GENERAL SERVICE AND OTHER LOCALLY RECRUITED CATEGORIES

Recalling section III, paragraph 1, of its resolution 47/216 of 23 December 1992, in which it endorsed the reaffirmation by the International Civil Service Commission of the Flemming principle as the basis for the determination of conditions of service of the General Service and related categories,

Recalling also section IV.A of its resolution 49/223 of 23 December 1994, by which it requested the Commission to proceed with the current round of surveys at headquarters duty stations,

1. Notes that the International Civil Service Commission will provide a further report on the methodology for surveys of best-prevailing local conditions of employment at headquarters duty stations following the completion of the comprehensive review of the salary survey methodology in 1997;

2. Requests the Commission, as part of its review of the methodology for salary setting for staff in the General Service and other locally recruited categories, to resolve, to the extent possible, inconsistencies between this methodology and the one which is applied pursuant to the Noblemaire principle, inter alia, by examining the question of overlap in remuneration between the two categories;

3. Notes also the results of the salary surveys in New York, Geneva and Rome as reported in chapter IV of the report of the Commission; 1/

III

WORK PROGRAMME

Recalling section V, paragraph 2, of its resolution 48/224, in which it urged the International Civil Service Commission to devote further attention to personnel management issues,

1. Requests the International Civil Service Commission to examine means of reducing the costs of its studies;

2. Also requests the Commission and the executive heads of the organizations of the United Nations common system to ensure that adequate attention is given to all aspects of human resources management, including the improvement of non-monetary aspects of conditions of service, as set out for example in article 14 of the statute of the Commission;

3. Further requests the Commission to give priority to the matters addressed in section I of the present resolution in its programme of work;

IV

FUNCTIONING OF THE COMMISSION

Recalling section II, paragraph 5, of its resolution 49/223, in which it requested the staff bodies, the organizations and the International Civil Service Commission to review with all urgency how the consultative process of the Commission could best be furthered and to report thereon to the General Assembly,

1. Reaffirms the validity of the statute of the International Civil Service Commission and in particular article 6 thereof whereby its members shall perform their functions in full independence and with impartiality;

2. Welcomes the Commission's decision, as contained in paragraphs 54 to 56 of its report, 1/ to implement a number of measures to improve its effectiveness and to introduce, on a trial basis, revised arrangements for the timing and length of its sessions, and in that context, requests the Commission to enhance further the transparency of its work, taking into account the relevant articles of the statute and its rules of procedure;

3. Calls upon Member States and the Secretary-General, in the context of articles 3 and 4 of the statute of the Commission, to ensure through the selection process of candidates for appointment that the Commission has the requisite technical skills and broad managerial experience among its membership;

4. Notes that the representatives of the Coordinating Committee for International Staff Unions and Associations and the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations have both suspended participation in the work of the Commission, and calls upon those bodies to resume participation in the work of the Commission in a spirit of cooperation and non-confrontation;

5. Requests the Commission to ensure that its reports contain clear and readily understandable explanations of its technical recommendations.